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First North American photographic record of the Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

William A. Montevecchi, Bruce Mactavish, and Ian R. Kirkham

ON JUNE 25, 1980, we observed a Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*) in a wooded area off the Goose Cove Road, just south of St. Anthony, Newfoundland (51°22'N, 55°35'W). Our attention was first drawn to the bird on hearing a strange and very distinct song that fits Voous's (1960) description: a series of clear robin-like notes followed by protracted warbling sounds (see also Peterson, Mountford and Hollom 1966). We observed the bird for about one hour, as it flew among the coniferous trees in the area, alighting frequently to perch and sing.

On June 26, Montevecchi and Kirkham returned to the same location, again found the Redwing flying about and singing from a number of perches, and photographed and observed the bird for about two hours. The Redwing apparently maintained this territorial behavior in the same location for at least 16 days, as the bird was seen again on June 30 by Norm Chesterfield, and Mactavish found it singing in the same area on July 11. The Redwing was not found by a birder who searched the area on July 17.

The photograph in Fig. 1 shows the diagnostic characteristics of the Redwing: the superciliary eye stripe, wide white stripe below the cheek, streaking on the breast, and chestnut flanks. The only previous North American sighting of a Redwing was at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens County, New York on February 20-24, 1959, and as noted by

Vickery (1980b) the provenance of this occurrence remains in doubt owing to the proximity of John F. Kennedy International Airport, where extraordinary escapees from bird shipments have been occasionally found.

Redwings breed in Iceland and have strayed to Greenland. The bird sighted in Newfoundland was very likely coincidental with two other European vagrants *i.e.* Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) and European Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) and a regular migrant from the Old World to Arctic America, a Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) all sighted in the area in May (Vickery 1980a).

We are grateful to Dr. W. Earl Godfrey for examining the photograph and transparency and confirming the identification and to Roy Ficken for printing the photograph. The Redwing was observed during field work supported by a Vice-President's Grant from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

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Figure 1. Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*) photographed just south of St. Anthony, Newfoundland on June 26, 1980. Photo/W.A. Montevecchi.

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[It should be noted that there is general agreement among those observers who studied the Queens County, N.Y., Redwing, that despite its proximity to JFK airport, it was not an escape. *Turdus* thrushes are not often caged and not easily transported; a survivor of a transAtlantic flight would have shown damage to primaries and rectrices, which this bird did not; there was no evidence of scalyfoot infection, to which captive *Turdids* are highly susceptible; the bird's behavior in the field was typically wild. Further, the February date might have mirrored Redwing behavior in Europe, since they often move south in mid-winter. Finally, many of the rarities recorded at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge are birds that could only have arrived under their own power.—Ed.]